Northern Region

Preliminary Plan

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Ministry of
Natural
Resources

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Tidewater Provincial Park Management Plan

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Tidewater Provincial Park is located twenty kilometres from the mouth of the Moose River, in the Moosonee District of the Ministry of Natural Resources Northern Administrative Region (Figures 1 & 2). The park consists of sections of five islands which lie between the communities of Moosonee and Moose Factory (Figure 3). Of the five islands (Bushy, Butler, North Charles, South Charles and Haysey), only North Charles is developed. Development commenced in the mid 1960s, and the park was established in regulation in 1970.

The landscape of this 980 hectare park is characteristic of the Hudson Bay Lowlands, one of the largest flat areas on earth. The park islands are underlain by rocks of the Middle Devonian era, capped by glacial debris, marine clay and rich alluvial soil. The estuarine tides of the Moose River exert a considerable influence on the park environment. Vegetation is essentially a flood-plain forest, with a variety of maritime and subarctic/arctic vascular plant species.

The park offers camping (30 sites) and day use facilities (shelters, tables, grills) to a clientele which includes local residents, canoeists and travellers on the Polar Bear Express excursion, which originates in Cochrane, 300 kilometres to the south (Figure 4).

More detailed resource information is available in the Tidewater Provincial Park Background Information report.

2.0 PARK POLICIES

2.1 Park Classification

Tidewater Provincial Park is classified as a natural environment park in recognition of its significant geomorphological and botanical features, along with its capacity to support a variety of outdoor recreation activities.

2.2 Park Goal

The park goal is to provide, within a high quality natural environment setting representative of the southern Hudson Bay Lowlands, outdoor recreation and educational experiences for park visitors.

2.3 Park Objectives

Tidewater will contribute to the achievement of the four objectives of the Provincial Parks system.

2.3.1 Protection

To protect provincially significant elements of the natural and cultural landscape of Ontario.

Tidewater contains two provincially significant landscape units (riparian polar forest and intertidal marshes), 10 provincially significant vascular plant species, and examples of estuary and tidal processes that are rare in the park system.

2.3.2 Recreation

To provide outdoor recreation opportunities ranging from high intensity day-use to low intensity camping.

The park, at optimum levels, can provide 4475 camping and 4825 day-use opportunities annually.

2.3.3 Tourism

To provide Ontario's residents and out-of province visitors with opportunities to discover and experience the distinctive regions of the Province.

2.3.4 Heritage Appreciation

To provide opportunities for exploration and appreciation of the outdoor natural and cultural heritage of Ontario.

2.4 Zoning (Figure 5)

Of the six zone designations possible in a natural environment class park, three will be utilized at Tidewater. They are:

2.4.1 Nature Reserve

NR1 Cedar Stand
A relatively pure stand on the west side of South Charles Island, this site is one of the northernmost accessible examples of this feature.

NR2 Butler Island Marshes
An intertidal, freshwater marsh which is provincially significant in itself, and which contains a variety of provincially significant plant species.

2.4.2 Natural Environnment

NE1 Bushy Island
Excellent representation of lowland thicket habitat typical of the Moose River estuary.

NE2 Haysey Island
Good representation of riparian forest growth exists here.

2.4.3 Development

D1 North Charles Island
This zone contains the current camping and day use facilities, and is the focus of visitor activity in the park.

D2 South Charles Island
This zone contains the Junior Ranger Camp at the south end of the island.

3.0 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICIES

The park will be managed in accordance with the general planning and management policies for natural environment class provincial parks (Ontario Provincial Parks - Planning and Management Policies, 1978). Specific direction, where required to address conditions special to Tidewater, is provided below.

Although the policies are presented in separate categories, all planning and management will recognize that the components are interrelated, and that an integrated approach will be required in order for the park to achieve its objectives.

3.1 Vegetation

Aerial spraying for the release of vegetation is prohibited. Pathogen spraying will not be permitted unless the park is seriously threatened by insects or disease. At such time, spraying will follow guidelines established by the Ministries of Natural Resources and Environment.

Regionally and provincially significant features will be subject to protective zoning. The removal of trees will be permitted only where they pose a threat to human safety or property, or where it is necessary to meet the park's protection and recreation objectives.

Berry picking and limited personal consumption of edible wild plants other than those found in the nature reserve zones will be permitted.

3.2 Wildlife

Hunting and trapping are not permitted in the park except as provided for by native treaty rights.

3.3 Landform

The park is often subject to serious flooding and coincident ice damage during spring breakup. Combined with the considerable effects of tides and current, the result has been severe bank undercutting and erosion, particularly on the south end of North Charles Island.

Breakwater reinforcements similar to the ones used to stabilize the south end of adjacent Moose Factory Island will be installed when funding permits.

Relocation of some campsites may be required in the interim.

3.4 Hydrology

Due to the flooding and ice damage referenced above, and deep frost penetration, vault privies have not worked successfully at Tidewater. The E.P.T.'s (earth pit toilets) that have replaced them are located "above" (up strata from) the well-head. In a very dry year the possibility exists that contaminants from the E.P.T.'s could penetrate the well-head aquifer. Early evidence of this will be provided by monitoring water quality according to standard procedures.

3.5 Lands

North Charles Island is directly in line with the most practical winter crossing route between Moose Factory and Moosonee. A letter of agreement regarding location of, and standards for, the road has been signed by representatives of the Moosonee Area Development Board and the Ministry. It grants permission for a temporary winter road across North Charles Island.

3.6 Cultural Resources

The original Moose Fort is reported to have been located on Haysey Island, although archaeological efforts to unearth the fort's remains have been unsuccessful. While no development of Haysey Island is proposed, a detailed, intensive study of the site should be undertaken to ascertain if, and where, remnants of the fort site are located.

4.0 CLIENT SERVICES MANAGEMENT POLICIES

4.1 Visitor Services

The park's major theme is the Northern Ontario Access Rail Route, which deals with the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway's effect upon the business and social life of the Hudson's Bay Company and their competitors in the frontier community of Moosonee-Moose Factory, Revillon Frères. A variation of this theme, Air Transport, could also be appropriately developed at Tidewater. The park's minor theme is the environment of the Hudson Bay Lowlands.

4.1.1 Communication

The communication function of the Tidewater visitor services program will be provided by park staff, particularly the Superintendent and the Revillon Frères Museum attendants; and by park publications and exhibits such as the one at district office. Through them, park users will be informed of park features, facilities, programs, and activities of interest in the surrounding area.

4.1.2 Outdoor Recreation

The aim of the recreation program for Tidewater will be to provide the best current information possible about park and local area recreational opportunities, special events, and so forth. These include camping, picnicking, boating, fishing, canoeing, hiking, and other related outdoor activities.

4.1.3 Outdoor Education

Tidewater Provincial Park will encourage groups or individuals to use park resources for outdoor education purposes which are nondestructive and compatible with park policy and protection guidelines. Information about park resources will be made available to groups interested in outdoor education.

4.2 Marketing

A marketing plan has been developed for the park which identifies mechanisms to promote visitation. There are three basic user groups which include: local residents, canoeists, and visitors who reach the area on the Polar Bear Express excursion. Marketing efforts will be aimed at all three, and will be included in the parks annual work program plans where funding is required to initiate the program.

4.3 Emergency Services

A park emergency plan will provide park staff with instructions for emergency situations. This plan will be reviewed yearly and updated as required. Hospital services are available in Moosonee Factory, and air ambulance services connect Moosonee-Moose Factory to southern communities.

5.0 DEVELOPMENT

No expansion of facilities at Tidewater is anticipated. Upgrading of existing facilities such as docks, breakwater structures, shelters, etc., will take place as required subject to available funding.

Figure 1

Provincial Setting

■ Tidewater Provincial Park

▩ Moosonee District

0 100 200 300km

North

Figure 2

Regional Setting

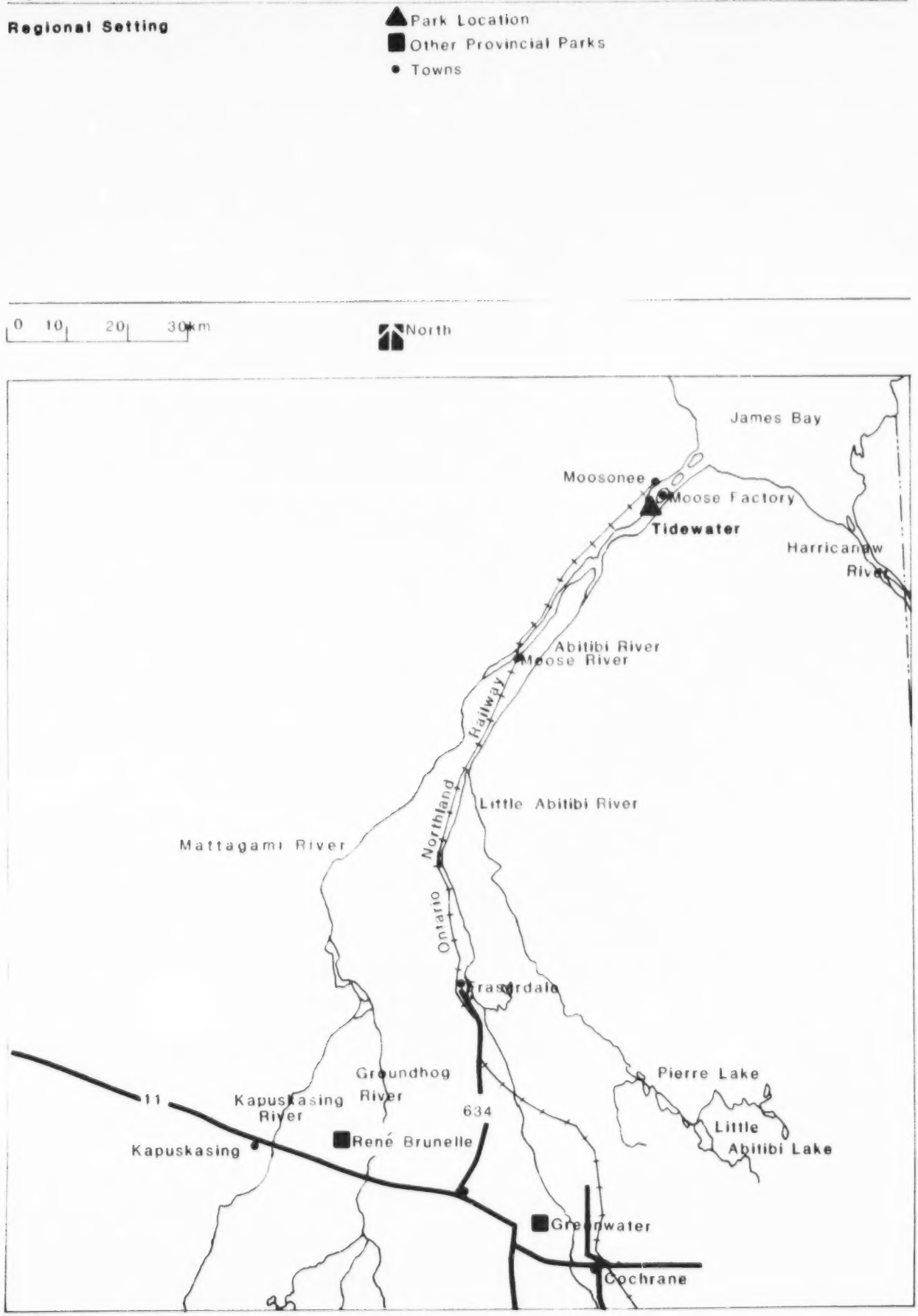


Figure 3

Park Area

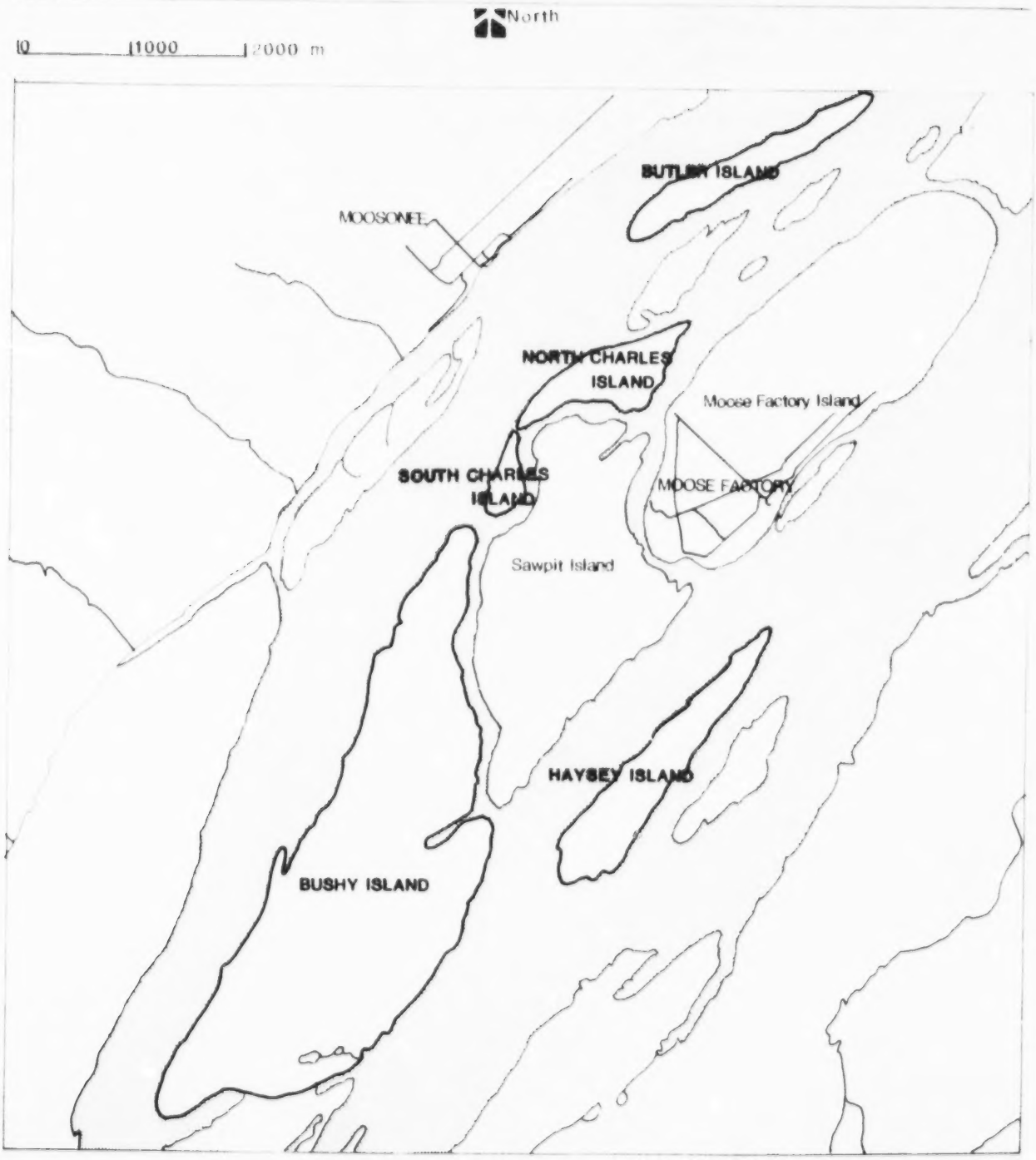


Figure 4

Park Facilities

1 Park Office
2 Picnic Shelter
3 Campsites
4 Toilets
5 Firewood
--- Park Trails

0 1000 2000 m

North

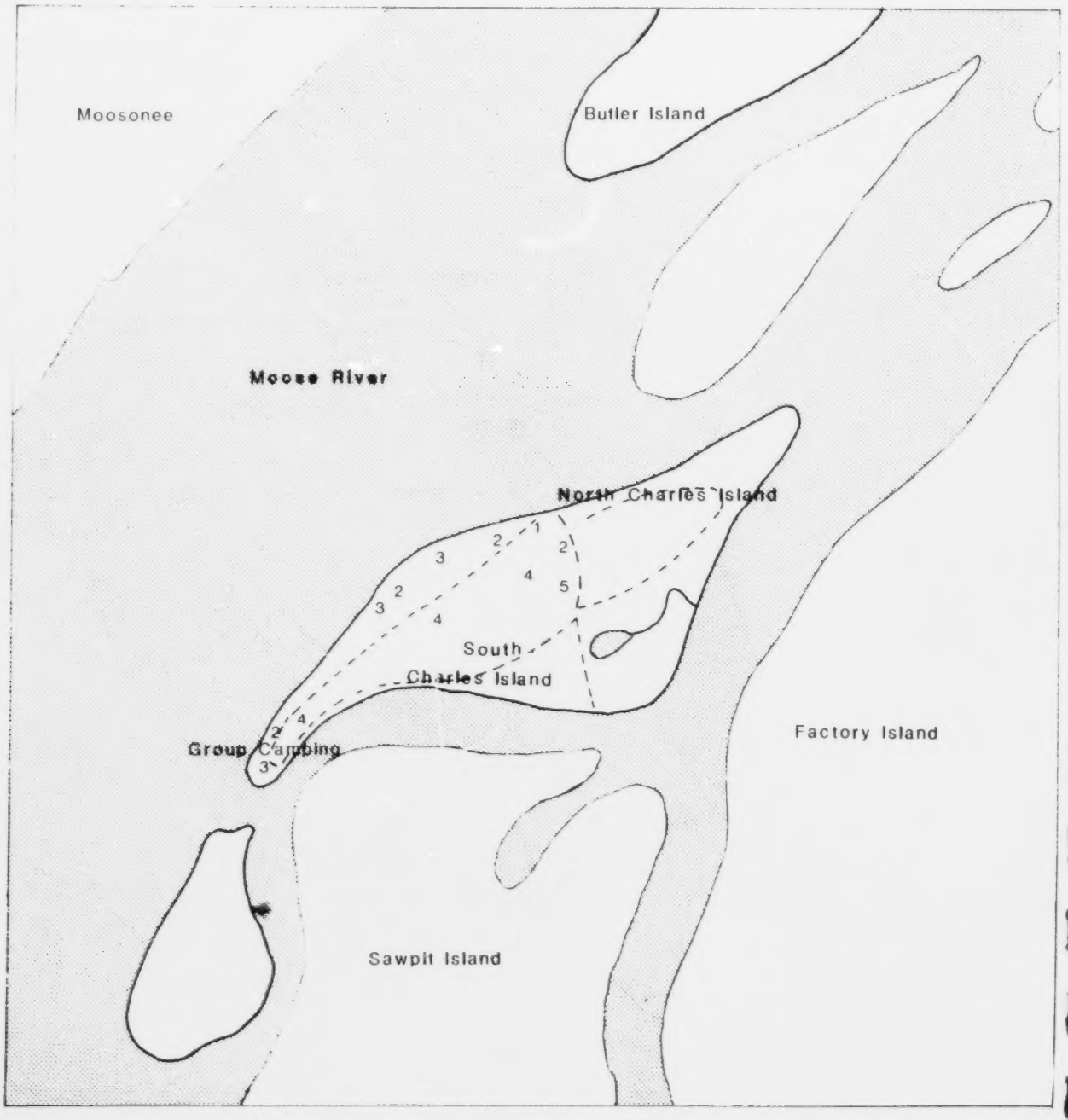


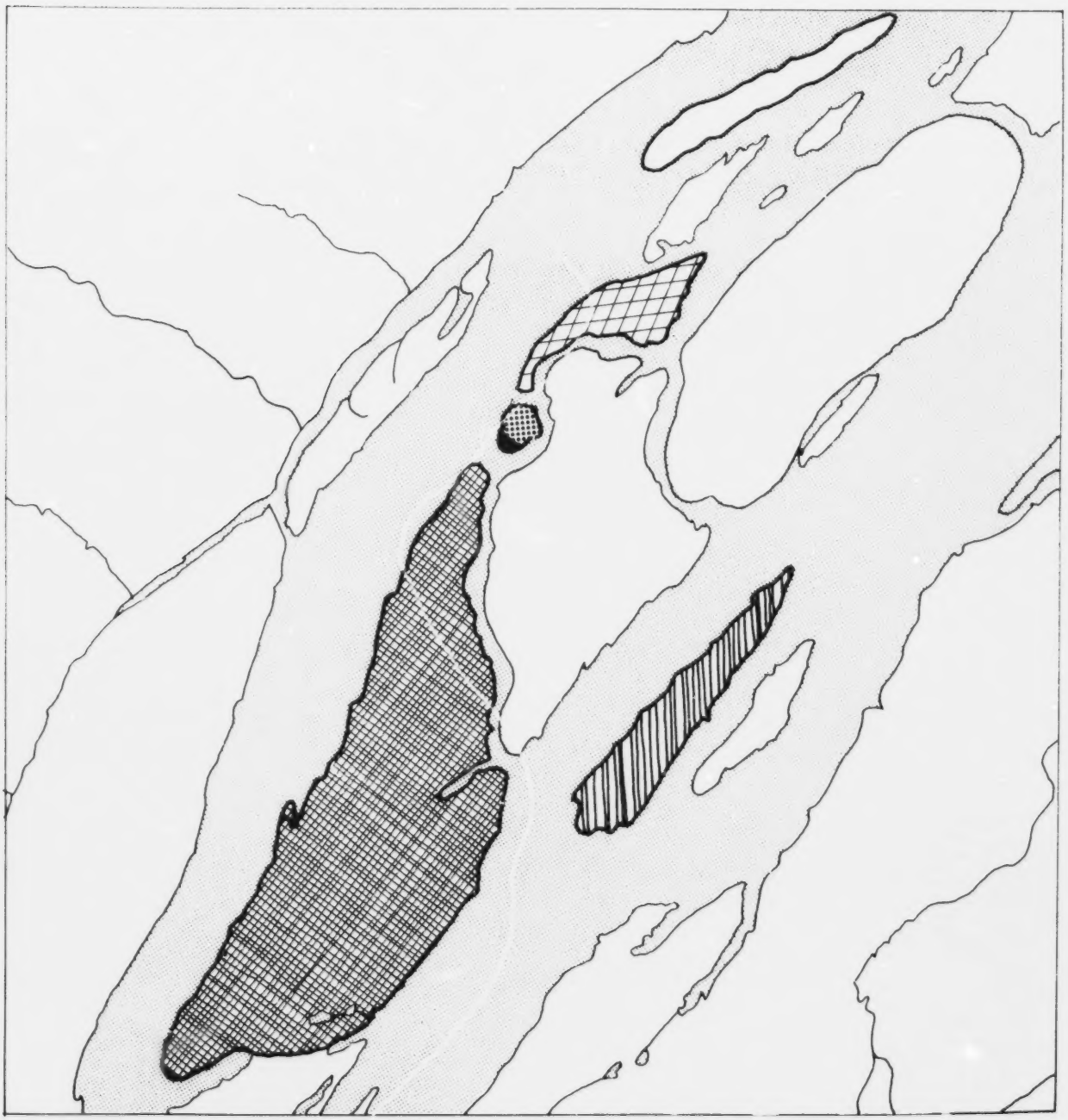
Figure 5

Zones

- Natural Environment Zone 1
- Natural Evironment Zone 2
- Development Zone 1
- Development Zone 2
- Nature Reserve Zone 1
- Nature Reserve Zone 2

North

0 1000 2000 m



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